



# Village of Vernon Hills Sustainability Planning 2023-2024

Updated 1/12/24



# Village of Vernon Hills Sustainability Plan 2023-2024

## INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the Village of Vernon Hills has been active in environmental protection activities through local and regional initiatives, and participation with various stakeholders.

During 2022, by Resolution 2022-004 the Village formally joined the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Greenest Region Compact. The Greenest Region Compact offers support and framework for Mayors and community leaders to identify and analyze initiatives and efforts that contribute to sustainability. The GRC framework focuses on 10 categories that include climate, economic development, energy, land, leadership, mobility, municipal operations, sustainable communities, water, and waste & recycling. By adopting the GRC the Village thereby formally committed to sustainability both locally and in the region.

Building on decades of previous efforts to include turning a brown space (former Nike base) into a green space; expanding Century Park by reclaiming a former commercial area and turning this area into a green space; converting the former Laschen Center (municipal building) into green space; and being an early leader in banning Coal Tar for parking surfaces and bans on Phosphate use in order to protect watersheds, the Village can utilize the GRC framework to continue achievement that contribute toward sustainability.

The GRC framework which builds on 30 sustainability plans and guiding documents in use by Illinois Municipalities, and incorporates more than 10 documents from regional, national or global organization that guide municipal actions. The GRC framework provides goals and objectives that are broadly applicable and suited to municipal action.

To assist Department-heads and staff prioritize short term projects, goals have been set for 2023. During the next year, the Village will continue to assess initiatives and projects



## SUSTAINABILITY GOALS – 2023



*Continue membership with the Solid Waste Agency of Lake County (SWALCO).*

- SWALCO's 2023 Top Legislative Priorities have been identified and approved by the membership and include:
  1. Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging and paper products used by daily consumers – SB1555/HB2827
  2. Extended Producer Responsibility Carpet – SB1984
  3. Extended Producer Responsibility for paint SB147/HB2153
- Each of these products costs individuals and communities a significant amount of resources to recover, process and/or dispose of safely. Proposed legislation would require producers to provide resources to SWALCO to support proper disposal, or in the case of paint, require support for handling of excess product and waste which is now handled through HHCW collection. Support for this legislation is within the scope of the Greenest Region Compact under Leadership (Advocate for State policies that support investment in municipal advances in sustainability).
- The Village of Vernon Hills has submitted witness slips in support of SWALCO and these initiatives.

*Continue to participate in the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus - Greenest Region Concept.*

- Continue to pursue objectives identified in the framework

*Onboard new Public Works Director*

- Provide orientation of the Village's commitment to sustainability, orientation on GRC and reporting, and Village goal setting

*Community Development Department*

- Improved Permit Process – Implement paper-reduction permit process for Technical Review. A streamlined process will be introduced that will reduce the amount of paper copies required as well as reduce printing costs for the petitioner.



- Begin to research fleet replacement timeline, vehicle options, and determine if hybrid and/or electric vehicle replacement is viable
- Evaluate infrastructure needs

*Police Department Fleet*

- While Patrol squads continue to have numerous demands that exceed the performance of current EV technology, staff has identified non-patrol squads that could begin to transition to hybrid and/or EV
- PD staff to further study and make recommendation for purchase

*Village Manager's Office*

- Implement Laserfische Enterprise Content Management. Project to allow data and content to be stored electronically and allow for rapid electronic delivery to end users. Will reduce paper usage.

*Monitor HHW and HCW disposal options*

With the closing of the Lincolnshire Household Chemical Waste Collection point, and with the reduced number of SWALCO regional collection events, explore other options.

- Waste Management has proposed a subscription service that would be funded by residents (as part of the municipal contract) known as "At Your Door"
- Communicate HHW and HCW disposal options and events to the community

**VILLAGE OF VERNON HILLS  
RESOLUTION 2022-004**

**A RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE METROPOLITAN MAYORS CAUCUS' GREENEST REGION COMPACT AND COMMITMENT FROM THE VILLAGE OF VERNON HILLS TO COLLABORATE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE CHICAGO REGION**

**WHEREAS**, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' provides a forum for the chief elected officials of the Chicago region to develop consensus and act on common public policy issues and multi-jurisdictional challenges; and

**WHEREAS**, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' participating Mayors and their communities have a history of environmental stewardship, from energy efficiency, water conservation, urban forestry, and participation in Clean Air Counts; and

**WHEREAS**, it is important for Mayors, and local governments throughout the United States to take leadership roles to advance sustainability both in their own communities and in concert with regional, national and global initiatives; and

**WHEREAS**, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus created the Greenest Region Compact to address environmental sustainability issues of global importance at the local level, and

**WHEREAS**, the Greenest Region Compact, an update to the original pledge and sometimes referred to as the Greenest Region Compact 2, is built on important environmental initiative already underway in communities, in partnership with many non-profit, state, national and global objectives; and

**WHEREAS**, the Greenest Region Compact synthesizes sustainability goals already adopted by leading communities in the region; and these consensus goals align with common regional, state, national and global objectives; and

**WHEREAS**, the Greenest Region Compact offers a companion framework to guide communities of all sizes and strengths to assess their current efforts; develop a sustainability plan suited to local priorities, and will offer resources to help them succeed; and

**WHEREAS**, the consensus goals of the Greenest Region Compact will guide coordinated efforts toward enhanced quality of life for residents; protection and stewardship of the environment and sustainable economic vitality.

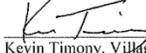
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Vernon Hills, Lake County, Illinois, endorses the Greenest Region Compact proposed by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and agrees to work to achieve them, both in their own communities and in collaboration throughout the region.

Dated the 15<sup>th</sup> day of February 2022

Adopted by roll call votes as follows:

AYES: 6 – Forster, Schenk, Takaoka, Marquardt, Oppenheim, Koch  
 NAYS: 0 - None  
 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING: Byrne

PASSED: 02/15/2022  
 APPROVED: 02/15/2022  
 ATTEST: 02/15/2022

  
 Kevin Timony, Village Clerk



  
 Thom Koch Jr., Village President Pro Tem



### *Residential (Municipal) Waste Contract*

- Prepare for negotiations and determine strategy to achieve the next contract from WM, or
- Prepare RFP

### *Continue to engage all stakeholders who are committed to sustainability*

- SWALCO, Waste Management, Vernon Hills-Lincolnshire Go Green
- Conduct meetings as necessary

### *Single Use Plastics Legislation*

- Monitor pending legislation that proposes a statewide tax and/or ban on plastic and paper bags.
  - *Continue to engage retailer to determine if sustainability planning is underway of voluntary steps are being considered.*

### *Additional Initiatives 2024 - Board Approved - January 9, 2024*

- LED conversion program for Village streets. (Energy - Upgrade Streetlight Equipment)
- Plan to implement EV charging station on Village property, (Mobility -Collaborate to provide alternative fuel infrastructure at public sites).
- Implementation of the Master Plan for restoration of Harvey Lake, (Land - Manage public areas landscapes to optimize ecosystems and support biodiversity).
- Development of the Village's Pedestrian and Bike Master Plan, (Mobility - Create a bicycle and pedestrian plan to improve connectivity in the community).
- Bicycle Way Finding Project – Signage to encourage bicycle transportation and connectivity to Village businesses and attractions.
- Pursue electric aggregation – It is the Village’s intent to identify vendors who can deliver electricity originating from green / renewable sources for residents.
- Seavey Ditch Stream Restoration – Program to reduce sediment leading into Lake Charles.
- Lake Charles Sediment Removal (mouth of Lake) and Sediment Trap Project (at Gregg’s Parkway) to reduce sediment leading into Lake Charles.
- Lake Charles Shoreline Restoration and WDR Golf Course Channel Restoration Project



# SUSTAINABILITY CATEGORIES FOR LONG-TERM GOAL SETTING AND OBJECTIVE EXAMPLES

## CLIMATE

**Goals** include: limiting greenhouse gas emissions, air quality, resiliency, and education and outreach.

**Objectives** include: committing to the Compact of Mayors, regulations that prohibit the burning of landscape waste, education about climate change

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Goals** include: promoting innovation and cultivating local and sustainable development, jobs and businesses.

**Objectives** include: encouraging green innovation among residents and businesses; promoting local goods and services; promoting tourism featuring the natural and cultural assets of the community.

## ENERGY

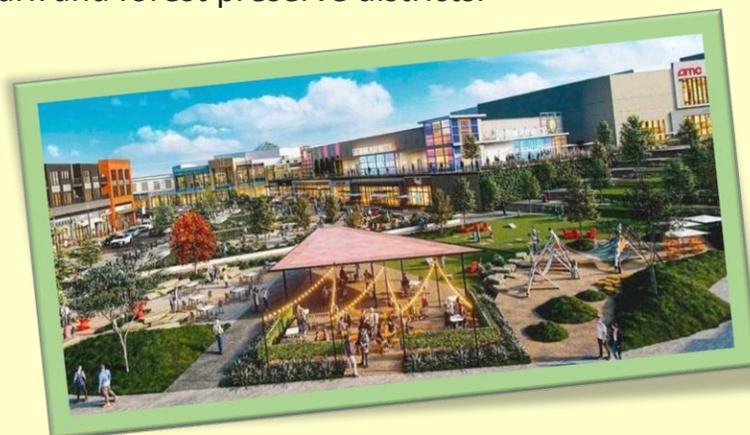
**Goals** include: energy efficiency, advancing renewable energy, reducing energy consumption, enacting policies that support clean energy, engaging the community on clean energy practices.

**Objectives** include planning for long-term energy efficient equipment, supporting renewable energy technologies in the community; community education.

## LAND USE

**Goals** include: encouraging strategic development that upholds sustainability principles.

**Objectives** includes protecting green fields and open space, maintain beautiful landscapes & streetscapes to enhance gateways, business districts and important public spaces; and collaboration with park and forest preserve districts.



**Leadership Goals** include: advocating for policies that align with and advance the GRC; work collaboratively towards a sustainable region.

**Objectives** include: participating with other local governments to achieve efficiency and sustainability, partner with non-governmental organizations to advance sustainability in the community.

## **MOBILITY**

**Goals** include: support safe and effective transportation, promote public and sustainable transportation.

**Objectives** include identifying gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle networks, improve connectivity in the community promote the availability of regional transportation options.

## **MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS**

**Goals** include: leading by example and integrating sustainability into all municipal operations

**Objectives** include adoption of the GRC, managing special events sustainably, education of staff on sustainable practices.

## **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

**Goals** include: connecting community members to existing services that support health and wellness, ensuring essential human services are available,

**Objectives** include educating the community about sustainability initiatives using municipal communication platforms, supporting social justice and equity throughout the Village staff community, promoting beauty and livability in community design, stewardship, and partnerships.

## **WATER**

**Goals** include: protecting and improving water quality, managing waste systems sustainably.



**Objectives** include avoiding the use of coal tar sealants, using sensible salting strategies to reduce chloride contamination, enhance natural features of storm water detention and retention systems.

## WASTE & RECYCLING

**Goals** include: supporting sustainable material management, supporting recycling, and diverting waste from landfills.

**Objectives** include engaging with solid waste agencies to manage waste sustainably, education of waste, recycling, and compost programs available for the community, discouraging product use that results in unmanageable waste.

**RESIDENTIAL FOOD SCRAP COMPOSTING PROGRAM**

April is the start of the season for Residential Food Scrap Composting Programs in your community. Your town participates in a ride along food scrap composting program that allows you to add food scraps to your landscape waste (serviced April-November). We want YOU to take advantage of this environmentally beneficial service today! Please see below the simple and easy guidelines for how to compost your food scraps.

**Why Compost Food Scraps?**

- It's Easy!** Collect food scraps into a container & set out as part of your community's seasonal landscape waste collection program.
- It rides along free with your landscape waste!** As part of the sticker program or subscription option, please call your hauler if you have questions.
- Reduces garbage and preserves landfill space.**
- Reduces greenhouse gas production at landfills.**
- Creates compost** - a great soil amendment!

**How to Compost Food Scraps:**

- Collect acceptable food scraps** in your kitchen collector. Do not use plastic or biodegradable bags to line your collector.
- Empty the food scraps** into a rigid curbside landscape waste container (line with a brown paper landscape waste collection bag if needed).
- Set out** your landscape waste and food scraps on the regularly scheduled waste collection day.
- Tips to Reduce Possible Odors or Pests:** You may want to line your kitchen container with newspaper, paper towels or a paper bag, empty frequently, wash after use, sprinkle with baking soda, keep container closed.

**What Happens to My Food Scraps and Landscape Waste?**

Food scraps and landscape waste that is collected curbside is taken to a permitted compost facility where the food scraps and landscape waste are processed into a final compost product.

Composting food scraps and landscape waste reduces the amount of waste dumped into our landfills and helps reduce greenhouse gas production. Compost can be used on your lawn, in your garden or landscape project, and to suppress weeds, conserve water and increase soil health.

**What can be composted?**

Visit our Household Compost Guide here: [www.swalco.org/compostguide](http://www.swalco.org/compostguide)

- Fruits and Vegetables**
- Coffee grounds, tea bags & filters**
- Bread, rice, pasta, cereal, grains, nuts & shells**
- Meat, poultry, seafood** (including shells and bones)
- Dairy & Eggs** (including shells, no liquids)
- Paper products** (including clean or dirty paper towels, plates, napkins, egg cartons & pizza boxes)
- Plants, cut flowers, leaves, grass, branches, weeds**

**DO NOT INCLUDE:**  
Plastic (including plastic bags), Styrofoam, glass, diapers, metal, liquids, grease, oil & pet waste

For more information on composting at home, visit [swalco.org](http://swalco.org)



## 2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

### JANUARY 2022

Vernon Hills Join the Greenest Region Compact, Village Board passes Ordinance 9-12 (*Climate – Commit to the Compact of Mayors*)

Educational component for Village staff on the topic of sustainability (*Municipal Operations – Training*)

Familiarization for staff on purchasing and giving consideration to sustainability (*Municipal Operations – Training*)

- Daily use items like plastics should be avoided, and instead purchase items that are biodegradable, recyclable, and/or compostable.

Village of Vernon Hills signed a witness slip and supported SWALCO's initiative to pass the Carpet Stewardship Bill. (*Leadership – Advocate for policies that contribute to sustainability*).

Installation of filtered water stations to reduce need for purchase of (plastic) bottled water. (*Waste and Recycling – Discourage use of products resulting in unmanageable waste*).

### FEBRUARY 2022

participated in the Community Solar Webinar presentation on opportunities for renewable energy. (*Energy - Collaboration, support, education on clean energy options for the community*).

- One challenge with this specific program was a requirement for a 10-acre parcel to be used as a municipal solar field.

Assistant Village Manager's position assigned to join the GRC Environmental Committee (*Municipal Operations – dedication of staff to sustainability initiatives*).

Village presented information on existing infrastructure and energy use for the Vernon Township Energy Resilience Commission feasibility study. (*Municipal Operations – Leverage Grants Opportunities*)



Promotion of 211 on Village Communications platforms.  
*(Sustainable Communities – Ensure essential human service programs are available)*

## **MARCH 2022**

Tree City status awarded to the Village of Vernon Hills by the Arbor Day Foundation  
*(March 4, 2022)*

Development of Village EOP – new Illinois guidelines.  
*(Sustainable Communities – Create a community that is well prepared for disaster)*

Creation of Butterfield Road bike and pedestrian path connecting Gregg's Landing to NCT  
*(Mobility – Coordinate with regional transportation agencies to maximize bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and mobility).*

## **APRIL 2022**

Village staff gave a presentation to the Rotary Club on the benefits of supporting green initiatives, the Greenest Region Compact, and the Village's commitment to sustainability. *(Municipal Operations - Educate community partners)*

Passing of Ordinance 2022-29, authorizing a contract (not to exceed \$120,000) for ecological services to perform native stewardship in the Village's open spaces *(Land – Long term management).*

Passing of Ordinance 2022-038, authorizing a contract with Clark Aquatic (not to exceed \$33,000) for weed and algae control in Village ponds *(Water – Enhance natural features of storm water detention and retention systems).*

Passing of Ordinance 2021-108, authorizing a contract with Burke Engineering for design services to plan the installation of a boardwalk along Lake Harvey *(Water – allowing public access and encouraging stewardship of waterways).*

Village of VH & Waste Management sponsored an Earth Day event for Village Seniors and provided native plants that are beneficial to good a health and the environment (4/22/22).  
*(Municipal Operations – Special Event Management)*

Filipino Cultural Awareness Day – Vernon Hills Seniors Organization participated in this event at the Village Hall on 4/19/22, *(Sustainable Communities – Foster an understanding of diverse cultures and traditions).*



Police Department and Village Board members participated in Darshana: A Glimpse into Hindu Civilization) at the Sullivan Center on 4/23/22. *(Sustainable Communities – Foster an understanding of diverse cultures and traditions).*

Village staff participated in the Metropolitan Mayor’s Caucus webinar on Community Bike and Pedestrian Plans, 4/28/22. *(Mobility – Collaborate to develop transportation infrastructure with context sensitivity).*

Trustee Takaoka and Village staff met with officials from Greystar (Everleigh) on 4/28 and received an update on the proposed creation of a “rain garden,” to be adjacent to the water feature leading into the residential development, *(Sustainable Communities – Support Community Gardens).*

Spring maintenance and plantings at public spaces and streetscapes, *(Land – Maintain beautiful landscapes and streetscapes to enhance gateways and important public spaces).*

## **MAY 2022**

Village of Vernon Hills earned Tree City Status - 30 years in a row!  
*(Land – Earn Tree City Status)*

- Components include the requirement to spend at least \$2.08 cents per capita on forestry (the Village spends approximately double this amount), and have a forestry department *(Land – Sustain and renew urban forest).*

Arbor Day Event at the Arboretheater - May 14, 2022  
*(Municipal Operations – Special Event Management)*

- Educational component about the value of the native trees and plant materials
- Native saplings provided
- Partnership with Vernon Hills-Lincolnshire Go Green on educational component  
*(Food Waste and Curbside Composting and Protecting Habitat for pollinators)*

Implementation & Promotion of Ride Lake County  
*(Mobility – Support Regional Transportation Innovation)*

- Information provided to all Seniors Organization members and Senior Living Communities. Information also placed on Village Communications platforms.



Network with SWALCO regarding opportunities to expand recycling programs past pilot program status

*(Leadership – Seek Collaboration with the business sector to support municipal sustainability)*

SWALCO Re-Use a Shoe Collection Event at VHPW – 5/5/22

*(Municipal Operations – Special Event Management)*

SWALCO Rain Barrel and Compost Bin Event – 5/13/22

*(Municipal Operations – Special Event Management)*

Utilize Village communications to create awareness and promotion of the Village's simplified solar panel permitting process *(Economic Development)*

Utilize Village communications to create awareness of the Illinois Choice Program, allowing residents to acquire their energy from green sources *(Economic Development)*

Promotion of SWALCO special materials collection events. This new program starts May 25, and future events will be on the third Wednesday of every month from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Information shared to be shared on all Village Communications platforms to create awareness of this waste diversion program

*(Waste – Provide access to recycling infrastructure and services at public places)*

Village staff met with consultants from Veregy to discuss assessing Village facilities for potential green energy implementations, May 4, 2022

*(Energy – Retro-commissioning study for facilities)*

Village Emergency Operations Plan is formally reviewed and approved by Lake County Emergency Management Agency

*(Sustainable Communities – Create a community that is well prepared for disaster)*

## **JUNE 2022**

Village of Vernon Hills adopts SWALCO model policy on Compost Procurement

*(Waste & Recycling – Support regional efforts for developing food scrap composting services)*

Community Development continues to collaborate with Centennial and Kimley Horn to create and construct 'vibrant public gathering spaces' at H2O *(Land – 'Placemaking')*



Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus Environmental Committee – Energy Subcommittee, June 21, 2022 – Briefing on Utility Energy Company Efficiency Plans and Programs  
*(Energy – Partner with utilities to promote energy efficiency programs to the community)*

SWALCO Rain Barrel and Compost Bin Event – 5/13/22  
*(Municipal Operations – Special Event Management)*

Renewal of Village Diversity & Inclusion Initiative – Dr. Watkins is conducting follow up meetings with staff, (Sustainable Communities - Support social justice and equity throughout the community).

Promotion of Park and Forest Preserve Districts, (Land - Collaborate with partners to promote recreational opportunities that are accessible to all).

Arbortheater Concert Series – June 15 – August 4. Seven free concerts in the park, (Land – Enhance recreational opportunities that are accessible to all residents).

Meeting with Com-Ed representatives regarding Village energy usage and discussion about sustainable energy, June 15. Darren Boundy advised he can provide content for sharing on Village communications platforms to help raise awareness of “choice” programs that give consumers opportunities to purchase their energy from specific providers, (Energy – Support Procurement of renewable energy through community choice programs).

Meeting with Go Green Vernon Hills – Lincolnshire, Com-ed, and Village staff, June 23. Discussion about sustainability and efficiency efforts in regard to energy, and the VTERC, (Leadership – Share information about municipal leadership regarding sustainability with the community).

## **JULY 2022**

Use of Vernon Hills Athletic Complex for Pipe City Tournament – *(Land – Make parks accessible for recreational opportunities).*

Promotion of Park and Forest Preserve Districts – Promotion of Lake County Forest Preserves and programs during Summer, *(Land - Collaborate with partners to promote recreational opportunities that are accessible to all).*

Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus Environmental Committee – Leading Healthy Communities, July 19, 2022. - Briefing on the role of leadership in setting the tone for culture and vibrancy



of the community, *(Sustainable Communities – connecting to services that support health and wellness)*.

Preparation and response to pest and disease threats to public health – Village of Vernon Hills and Clarke to provide mosquito monitoring and management with adjoining municipalities to apply appropriate repellents in standing water and air to deter a range of potential health issues, *(Health & Safety - Foster a culture of health and safety wellness)*.

Collaborate to restore wetland and other important eco-systems – buckthorn and shoreline stabilization of Harvey Lake, *(Land – Conserve and restore and enhance natural features and ecosystems)*.

Foster healthy community relationships through use of open space / Enhance parks & open space for recreational opportunities accessible to all residents – Partnership between Park District and Village to host Summer Celebration, *(Land - Parks and Open Space – Support Networks of accessible, well-used and enjoyable parks)*.

Promotion of 211 on Village communications platforms, *(Sustainable Communities – Ensure high quality essential human service programs are available)*.

Landscaping Plan to improve aesthetics of Townline Commons / RT 60 and Fairway – Board presentation July 19, 2022.

Installation of bicycle racks at Portillo's – Board Meeting 7/19/22. The petitioner (Portillo's) requested to have additional vehicular lanes added to their drive-thru. A citizen approached the Board and requested consideration be given to have the restaurant bicycle-friendly, with bike parking made available. The petitioner agreed and advised bike racks would be installed, *(Mobility – Support safe and active transportation – Create bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout the community)*.

## **AUGUST 2022**

Installation of water station to reduce need for purchase of (plastic) bottled water at the Municipal Golf Course. *(Waste and Recycling – Discourage use of products resulting in unmanageable waste)*.

Veregy presented options for incorporating renewable energy into Village Capital Improvement Plan, (8/3/22). These options were received from participating in the VTERC, *(Energy – Support audits and studies of institutional facilities)*.



Promotion of Park and Forest Preserve Districts - Little Bear RibFest. Aquatic Center events, etc; (*Land - Collaborate with partners to promote recreational opportunities that are accessible to all*).

Foster healthy community relationships through use of open space / Enhance parks & open space for recreational opportunities accessible to all residents – Partnership between Park District and Village to conduct Ribfest, (*Land - Parks and Open Space – Support Networks of accessible, well-used and enjoyable parks*).

Metropolitan Mayor’s Caucus Environmental Committee – Natural Solutions – Green Infrastructure – August 16, 2022. – Presentation on the value of green infrastructure for equitable climate mitigation and adaptation. Examples from the Village of Vernon Hills that were shared include the rain garden being implemented at the Everleigh adjacent to the Continental Executive Park retention pond and plan to increase accessibility of Harvey Lake, (*Land – Encourage conservation design to protect natural resources*).

SWALCO 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Meeting, August 25. Numerous initiatives discussed to include Extended Producer Responsibility legislation (EPR) for retail packaging which is currently being reviewed downstate. This legislation would push for more responsibility with the management of waste on the producer and less on municipal government, (*Leadership – Partner with NGO to advanced sustainability in the community and regionally*).

Village of Vernon Hills and Clarke to perform mosquito management application on 8/31 to reduce potential for community health issues, (*Health & Safety - Foster a culture of health and safety wellness*).

Promotion of SWALCO clothing and textile collection points. Information shared to be shared on all Village Communications platforms to create awareness of this waste diversion program  
(*Waste – Provide access to recycling infrastructure and services at public places*)

## **SEPTEMBER 2022**

Use of Vernon Hills Athletic Complex for Chicago Cup (*Land – Make parks accessible for recreational opportunities for all*).

VH Communications shared content on cable access demonstrating the benefits of organics collection and composting, (*Sustainable Communities – Educate the community about sustainability utilizing existing municipal communication outlets*).



VH Communications team members and platforms made accessible to a resident who desired to create content to educate residents on the environmental benefits of electrical blowers versus gas blowers, *(Sustainable Communities – Educate the community about sustainability utilizing existing municipal communication outlets).*

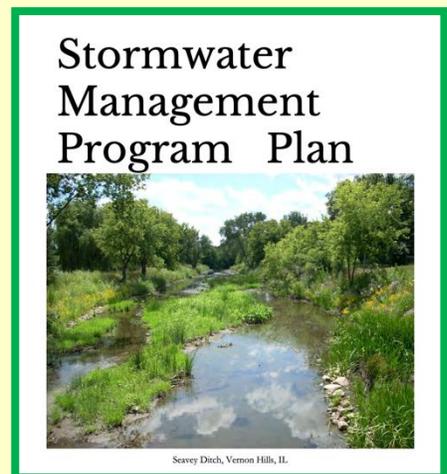
Fall maintenance and plantings at public spaces and streetscapes, *(Land – Maintain beautiful landscapes and streetscapes to enhance gateways and important public spaces).*

Village staff met with Waste Management officials on September 13, 2022 to discuss operations and efficiencies. WM advised compressed natural gas trucks will be introduced into the fleet starting in 2023 – compressed natural gas vehicles produce 20-30% less emissions, *(Economic Development - Recognize and support businesses that practice and promote sustainability).*

Village staff participated in conference hosted by Go Green Illinois to learn about potential legislation to reduce the inflow of single-use plastics and how community groups can support re-use programs, September 13, 2022 *(Sustainable Communities – Participate in regional and national sustainability networks).*

Metropolitan Mayor’s Caucus Environmental Committee – Extended Producer Responsibility Legislation – September 20, 2022. Presentation by Walter Willis (SWALCO) and Sydney Harris of the Product Stewardship Institute on proposed legislation that would make product manufactures responsible for their products at the end of their lifecycle. Legislation has the goal of shifting financial responsibility and management away from the public sector and onto the manufacturer; and incentivizing manufactures to incorporate environmental considerations into the design of packaging, *(Waste & Recycling – Ban or discourage the use of products resulting in unmanageable waste (e.g plastics).*

Village received a grant from the DCEO for Storm Water Management Commission objectives to be evaluated by Burke Engineering to improve Lake Charles, *(Water – Protect Improve Water Quality – Support Post Development runoff reduction mitigation).*



## OCTOBER 2022

Lakeview Beautification Project - Concluding late Summer 2022, Public Works staff planted 40 trees and 60 shrubs along Lakeview Parkway to provide additional screening along the Lake Harvey fence line. In addition, staff has removed invasive vegetation in the area. Costs for the project totaled \$17,000, which included trees, shrubs, topsoil and mulch, (Land – Urban Forestry - Plant trees to sustain and renew the urban forest).

VH Communications shared content regarding SWALCO's Free Fall Compost Giveaway at The Park District's Trucks, Trunks & Treats Event, (Sustainable Communities – Educate the community about sustainability utilizing existing municipal communication outlets).

VH Communications shared community education content from SWALCO titled Green Halloween Tips. This content included information regarding Pumpkin Composting, reducing Halloween-related waste, purchasing eco-friendly content, etc; (Sustainable Communities – Educate the community about sustainability utilizing existing municipal communication outlets).

Public Works planted 72 new trees during October. 62 trees will be planted throughout the Village, 10 trees will be planted at the Municipal Golf Course, (Land – Urban Forestry - Plant trees to sustain and renew the urban forest).

Public Works collected and recycled 80 tires from the municipal fleet and disposed of these tires through a SWALCO / Illinois Environmental Protection Agency event collection event for local units of government, (Waste & Recycling - Promote and practice waste reduction and recycling in municipal operations).

SWALCO Board of Directors Meeting – October 20, 2022. Topics include expansion of clothing and textile programs. 85% of these materials end up in landfills. Efforts to redirect and recycle these materials include placing additional collection bins throughout the community. In addition to bins on Village properties, the Depke Center will have a collection bin and St. Mary's will have a collection bin. Vernon Hills has 10 collection bins and leads the County in sites, (Waste & Recycling – Divert Waste from landfills – Collaborate to provide recycling service for items not suitable for curbside pickup – e.g. clothing and shoes).

On October 24, 2022, Village staff participated in conference hosted by Vernon Township regarding opportunities for evaluating and pursuing renewable energy (Sustainable Communities – Participate in regional and national sustainability networks)



On October 28, 2022, Village Manager Timony presented the Village Board findings from the Vernon Township Energy Resiliency Commission feasibility study for the Village of Vernon Hills. Unfortunately, detailed information on grant funding opportunities is unclear and many of the taxing bodies have not committed to any specific projects, thus potential savings from combined efforts is not immediately realized. In the short-term (1-3 years), the Village's easiest opportunity to pursue energy resiliency initiatives, is to explore EV charging stations at Village facilities (primarily the Village Hall) and the use of EV fleets by the Community Development Department for day-to-day inspections, (Sustainable Communities – Participate in regional and national sustainability networks).

### **NOVEMBER 2022**

On November 10, 2022, Village Manager Timony assembled the Communications Team to discuss official communications and to ensure community values and character are accurately reflected; that messaging is professional, and access to services for the community is improved. Website content to be assessed and refined, to be more user-friendly (Sustainable Communities – Cultivate and preserve a welcoming and inclusive community character).

Content shared on Village communications platforms regarding America Recycles Day – November 15, 2022. This content is for educational purposes and shared information on the progress of having improved the national recycling rate from 7% in 1960 to the current rate of 32%, and impressed the need for further improvement. This content also illustrated the value recycling provides to the protection of the environment (Sustainable Communities – Encourage the community to participate in sustainability initiatives).

Vernon Hills Public Works to obtain specialized storage cabinets for use when “fly dumping” of chemical waste occurs – November 18, 2022. These cabinets will be acquired from SWALCO, former Lincolnshire Riverwoods HCW collection site (Waste & Recycling – Discourage Fly Dumping).

Village staff-initiated conversation with Waste Management regarding collection options for household chemical waste after learning the local collection point at Lincolnshire Riverwood Fire Department was being closed. A centralized HCW site will be scheduled by SWALCO periodically, however, this option requires residents often having to travel a distance and is time-consuming. One option includes adding a service for pick-up of HCW that would provide residents with a ‘personalized’ service alternative. This subject to be



further explored when reviewing waste provider options, (Waste and Recycling – Engage with solid waste agencies to manage waste sustainably).

On November 15, 2022 the Village Board recognized Hindu Heritage Month and the community efforts of the Sewa Diwali 2022 Food Drive with a Proclamation, (Sustainable Communities – Foster an understanding of diverse cultures and traditions).

On November 21, 2022 Village staff, Trustee Takaoka, along with community groups met to discuss policy and ordinances governing single-use plastics in the commercial corridor. It has been noted other Chicagoland communities have enacted a “ban” or “tax” on specific items such as plastic bags to encourage person to bring re-usable bags. This subject and its impacts to be further studied, (Waste & Recycling – Policy – Discourage use of products resulting in unmanageable waste).

## **DECEMBER 2022**

During the December 13, 2022 a resident requested the Village support amending a residential pod development agreement to allow solar roof panels on homes previously designated for cedar roof materials. The Village Board supported this request and will simplify the permitting process for solar panels to be installed within the Royal Birkdale pod, (Energy – Advance Renewable Energy – Support the adoption of renewable energy technologies in the community).

Staff has made contact representatives from each of the Village’s ‘big box’ grocers to determine if single-use plastics are used at point of sale and if they have a sustainability plan that includes moving away from single-use plastics. The Village has sent formal correspondence to Walmart, Target, and Mariano’s inviting them to participate in discussions on reducing reliance on single-use plastics at point of sale (Leadership – Seek collaboration with the business sector to support sustainability – product stewardship).

Village staff obtained information from SWALCO of a pending House Bill that would create a State-wide carry out bag fee. This bill is identified as HB4615 and sponsored by Representative Jonathan Carroll from Northbrook. Staff has contacted the Village’s downstate legal representatives and requested more information on this bill. A brief was prepared and sent to the Village Board. Staff continues to stay in liaison with legal representatives and is monitoring the status of this bill, (Leadership - Advocate for State policies that support municipal advances in sustainability).



VH Communications shared programming content on cable access regarding holiday sustainability. This campaign was prepared by Waste Management and titled Reduce, Reuse, and Rejoice and provides information on the environmental impacts of food waste and packaging waste generated during the holidays along with tips to reduce impacts on landfill through recycling, composting, and donation, (Sustainable Communities – Educate the community about sustainability utilizing existing municipal communication outlets).

## **2023 ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **JANUARY 2023**

Communications Team placed content on all platforms regarding available services for holiday tree removal by Waste Management and/or the Village, (Waste & Recycling – Educate the Community on available composting practices).

Public Works to provide Holiday Tree removal for residents (Waste & Recycling – Provide curbside recycling for residents).

SWALCO 2023 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Meeting, January 12, 2023. Standing Legislative Policies reviewed, 2023 Legislative Policy Top Priorities approved by the membership. Top Priorities include Extended Producer Responsibility for the packaging and paper products used daily by consumers and Carpet Recycling and Extended Producer Responsibility, (Leadership – Partner with NGO to advanced sustainability in the community and regionally).

On January 17, the Village Board approved Ordinance 2023-10 authorizing a two-year contract extension with Bluestem Ecological Services to perform native stewardship services for the 2023-24 seasons. This contract provides for native stewardship to control invasive plant material around ponds and open green spaces (Land – Conserve, Restore, and Enhance Natural Features and Ecosystems – Manage public landscapes to optimize ecosystems and support biodiversity).

Village staff visited major grocers in Vernon Hills to determine if there was interest in collaborative sustainability planning in regard to single-use plastics. Certified letters also sent detailing resident concerns and opportunities, (Leadership – Seek Collaboration with the business sector to support municipal sustainability).

LED Street light replacement Program - During the Fall of 2022 and Winter of 2023, Public Works staff converted 43 street light poles within the Corporate Woods Industrial Park and



Sugar Creek subdivision to LED's - project costs: \$55,000. The department anticipates converting 25 additional street light poles within the Thorne Grove subdivision; along with an additional 50 poles in other locations yet to be determined. The additional 75 conversions will be completed prior to Spring 2024, (Energy – Implement energy efficiency measures – lighting).

### **FEBRUARY 2023**

Village secured funding and easements to private properties in the area of RT 60 and Lakeview to begin lane widening projects and intersection improvements at Lakeview and Hawthorn Parkway. This initiative is estimated to cost approximately 4 million dollars is supported by grants and will greatly relieve congestion in this area, (Mobility – Transportation Infrastructure – Maintain efficient traffic flow within and around the community).

Police Department to assess opportunity to introduce hybrid vehicles into the fleet, (Municipal Operations – Plan to migrate vehicles to alternative fuel vehicles).

Community Development to continue to utilize vehicles from other departments that are being rotated out of service until hybrid or EV can be introduced into the fleet, (Municipal Operations - Extend useful life of physical assets).

Village staff continues to work with Morrill and Fiedler to monitor, evaluate, and have input on State legislation regarding single-use plastics on February 16, 2023, staff was advised Rep. Carroll's HB-5615 died with the 102 General Assembly ending on January 10. Senator Edly-Allen introduced SB-2211 which as written would prohibit grocery stores from providing single-use plastic bags and single-use paper bags. Staff to continue to monitor, (Leadership – Advocate for state policies that support municipal sustainability).

Des Plaines River Watershed Work Group continues to sample. The Village of Vernon Hills is a member and supports monitoring the water quality of the river and watershed. The sampling supports understanding of current conditions and assists with solutions, (Water – Water Quality – Collaborate with regional initiatives to protect lakes and rivers). Note – Due to this testing occurring periodically, this objective is being moved to re-occurring list of achievements.

*Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus Environmental Committee Meeting – February 21, 2023:* Briefing on Chicago Region Carbon Program, a region-wide program for tree planting and forest preservation projects. The goal of this program is to improve the health and canopy



of the urban forest in the Chicago region through increased tree planting and preservation. Information on tips and successful projects shared, (Leadership – Engage with non-governmental organizations and municipal associations to align with actions from the GRC).

Promotion of 211 on Village Communications platforms. (Sustainable Communities – Ensure essential human service programs are available).

### **MARCH 2023**

SWALCO communities (to include the Village of Vernon Hills) submitted witness slips for hearings within the Energy & Environmental Committee to support the legislative agenda of the municipal membership which include: Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging – SB1555/HB2827; Extended Producer Responsibility for Paint – SB147/HB2153; and Extended Producer Responsibility for Carpet SB1984. Each of these items costs individuals and communities' significant resources to recover and safely dispose. Proposed legislation would require producers to provide resources to SWALCO to support proper disposal or in the case of paint, require support for handling of excess product and waste, (Leadership – Advocate for State policies that support investment in municipal advances in sustainability).

Communications Team – Planning Meeting. Members were advised of significant dates in April to include Earth Day and Arbor Day, and to prepare content with Public Works staff to educate the community on sustainability projects and initiatives, (Sustainable Communities – Education – Educate the community about sustainability initiatives using municipal communications outlets).

Staff worked with the Village Diversity & Inclusion consultant to develop a communications plan to recognize the newly designated Federal Holiday – Juneteenth. The plan presented to the Board will include Juneteenth banners to be displayed during June and an educational component to be shared on Village communications platforms, (Sustainable Communities – Foster an understanding of diverse cultures and traditions).

Onboarding of new Public Works Director / Village Engineer – March 7, 2023. Chris Venatta joins the Village after serving the City of Evanston. This position will play a critical role in the next chapter of the Village's commitment to sustainability and the Greenest Region Compact, (Municipal Operations - Dedicate staff to direct sustainability initiatives).



Village staff has created a draft of the sustainability plan and goals for 2023-24. Plan to be shared with the Village Board during April, (Municipal Operations – formalize sustainability goals and objectives).

### **APRIL 2023**

Programming and education on the purpose of Earth Day, Arbor Day, and collective efforts that contribute to sustainability shared on Village communications platforms, (Sustainable Communities – Education – Educate the community about sustainability initiatives using municipal communications outlets).

Village of VH & Waste Management sponsored an Earth Day event for Village Seniors and provided native plants that are beneficial to good a health and the environment (4/18/23). WM discussed sustainability initiatives, (Municipal Operations – Host environmentally focused events).

Tree City status awarded to the Village of Vernon Hills by the Arbor Day Foundation (Land – Urban Forestry – Earn recognition for urban forest stewardship as a Tree City, USA).

Harvey Lake Boardwalk - During the Winter of 2023, Public Works staff constructed an elevated boardwalk along Harvey Lake to allow accessibility for Staff and equipment to maintain the native shoreline area; as well as provide an amenity for residents. The boardwalk was completed on February 24, 2023; whereas, ramping (stone and soil) to the boardwalk will be completed in Spring 2023, (Land – Parks & Open Space – Enhance parks, open space and recreational opportunities, create accessibility for all residents).

### **VILLAGE INITIATES THAT CONTRIBUTED TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY PRIOR TO JOINING THE GREENEST REGION COMPACT**

***Notes- the following Items are listed as Greenest Region Goals & Objectives for all communities and have been achieved by the Village and/or are tended to each year:***

- Provide curbside recycling, (*Waste and Recycling*).
- Collaborate to provide recycling services for items not suitable for curbside recycling include Re-Use a Shoe, Holiday Tree Pick up, Household Chemical Waste collection days, (*Waste and Recycling*).
- Provide Electronic Waste Collection Point, (*Waste and Recycling*).
- Support proper disposal of medical waste, (*Waste and Recycling*).
- Support pharmaceutical waste collection, (*Waste and Recycling*).



- Share the delivery of public services with other local governments. Village achievements include consolidated dispatch, fleet maintenance performed by PW for CFD, and snow plow operations between VHPD and Vernon Township, partnership with the Park District for VHAC and major summer events to include Vernon Hills Days and RibFest, *(Municipal Operations – Consolidation)*.
- Planting of 100 new trees at White Deer Run, *(Land – Plant trees to sustain and renew the urban forest)*.
- Village Mission Statement has added language of “welcoming” and “inclusive” – recommendation from Diversity & Inclusion Initiative; *(Sustainable Communities – Cultivate and preserve a welcoming and inclusive community character)*.
- Vernon Hills Emergency Communications – VHPD / CFPD; *(Municipal Operations – Consolidate and/or share the delivery of public services with other local governments)*.
- Vernon Hills Public Works Fleet Maintenance – support for CFPD; *(Municipal Operations – Consolidate and/or share the delivery of public services with other local governments)*.
- Utilization of Vernon Hills Public Works for fuel by area public sector entities; *(Municipal Operations – Consolidate and/or share the delivery of public services with other local governments)*.
- Energy efficiency measures - e.g. occupancy sensors; *(Energy – Implement energy efficiency measures that have a short term payback)*.
- Regulate burning of landscape waste. Prohibition of open burning via Ordinance 9-12; *(Climate – Maintain Clean and healthy air)*.
- Prioritize the acquisition, dedication and management of lands to create connected greenways – Conversion of Nike site to Vernon Hills Athletic Complex, *(Land Conserve, Restore, and enhance natural features)*.
- Conserve key natural assets – Protection of conservancy areas @ Port Clinton Road and RT 83, *(Land – Land Preservation – Conserve, Restore, and enhance natural features)*.
- Maintain beautiful landscapes and streetscapes to enhance gateways, business districts and important public spaces – Conducted Village-wide, *(Land – Landscapes – Sustain beautiful landscapes that provide ecosystem services)*.
- Create a bicycle and pedestrian plan to improve connectivity in the community and beyond, *(Mobility – Support safe and active transportation – see Comprehensive Plan – Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan)*.
- Provide bicycle parking at municipal facilities such as transit stations, *(Mobility - Support safe and active transportation – installation of bicycle rack at Metra)*.
- Landscaping and tree planting on roadway infrastructure and islands, *(Mobility – Incorporate trees and green infrastructure elements into roadway design)*.



- Silo preservation at Aspen Point, (*Sustainable Communities - Preserve and maintain the community's historic assets*).
- Cuneo Mansion / Estates Agreement Sustainable Communities – (*Preserve and maintain the community's historic assets*).
- Village Community Development Department, Centennial Real Estate, and planners dedicated to creating a 'walkable-community' in the redevelopment of H20. This includes Phase I (former Sears parcel), and Phase II (former Carson Pirie Scott parcel), (*Land – Encourage development of compact and complete residential neighborhoods*).

